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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/26/2027
TAGS: [PINS](#) [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PA](#)
SUBJECT: OVIEDO RELEASED ON CONDITIONAL LIBERTY

Classified By: DCM Michael J. Fitzpatrick; reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) Paraguay's Supreme Military Tribunal granted convicted coup-plotter General Lino Oviedo conditional liberty at approximately 11:00 a.m. EST September 6. All major press outlets carried the story. Oviedo waved to approximately 500 gathered supporters as he walked out of prison in civilian attire. According to press reports, he will visit the shrine to Paraguay's patron saint, the Virgin of Caacupe, located one hour outside of Asuncion, as a show of faith and gratitude for his release. Oviedo also plans to have a full medical checkup, and may give a press conference later this afternoon from one of his Asuncion residences. No announcements have been made about where he will spend his time under house arrest.

¶2. (S) COMMENT: Embassy contacts report that President Duarte traded Oviedo's conditional release for the General's promise to run for president on his own ticket, independent of National Coalition pre-candidate Fernando Lugo (thus splitting the opposition to continued Colorado rule). Reaction to Oviedo's release has been peaceful thus far. Military Forces Commanding General Soto privately told us he will be convoking the general officer corps and underscoring his commitment to an apolitical institution. We are carefully monitoring the possibility of social unrest, which is judged more likely following the next step in the legal process-- when the Supreme Court considers whether to absolve Oviedo of all remaining civilian charges and thus enable him to compete in the April presidential election. If asked, Embassy will comment that Oviedo's release is an internal Paraguayan matter. We will decline to speculate on his candidacy for the presidency, but will state the United States supports the election of leaders committed to democracy, economic development, and the institutionalization of justice for all Paraguayans, and that we are committed to working with whomever the Paraguayan people elect in free and fair elections. END COMMENT.

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